

Medical Practice Questions

EDITOR'S NOTE: From time to time medical practice questions of general interest are referred to the Scientific Board by the Quality Care Review Commission of the California Medical Association. Each is sent to members of the appropriate Scientific Advisory Panel.* Their responses are collated, reviewed and then submitted to the Quality Care Review Commission as the Scientific Board's opinion on the scientific and practice aspects of the question. The Commission adds suggestions to assist peer review units and authorizes publication.

These opinions and positions are informational only and are not intended to be used as instructions, directives or policy statements. The appropriateness of care in individual cases should not be determined by these answers, but should be reviewed by local peer review committees.

Questions and reprint requests may be submitted to the Medical Practice Questions Committee, Quality Care Review Commission, California Medical Association, 731 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Radial Keratotomy

QUESTION:

Is radial keratotomy considered acceptable medical treatment for correction of myopia?

OPINION:

It is the unanimous opinion of the Advisory Panel on Ophthalmology that radial keratotomy is an experimental procedure. This panel also strongly advocates that radial keratotomy be done only with the approval and control of an investigational review committee.

Morbid Obesity

QUESTION:

(1) What are suitable guidelines for differentiating morbid from nonmorbid obesity in case selection for surgical relief?

(2) What are currently acceptable indications for gastroplastic surgery in the treatment of morbid obesity?

OPINION:

It is the opinion of the Advisory Panels on General Surgery and Internal Medicine that

(1) Morbid obesity may be defined using all of the following criteria:

- (a) patient is more than 100 pounds overweight;
- (b) prolonged attempts at dieting have not been successful;
- (c) there are complications due to excessive

weight; for example, respiratory insufficiency, hypertension, diabetes or psychosocial impairment.

(2) Currently acceptable indications for surgery include all of the following:

- (a) patient is more than 100 pounds overweight;
- (b) patient is between 18 and 50 years of age;
- (c) absence of serious diseases contraindicating surgery;
- (d) all methods of nonsurgical therapy have failed;
- (e) surgical operation should be part of a comprehensive plan which includes preoperative and postoperative exercise, diet counseling and behavioral treatment.

Re-review of Mucous Membrane (Sublingual) Desensitization

QUESTION:

Is mucous membrane (sublingual) desensitization of proved therapeutic value in the treatment of allergy disorders?

OPINION:

The Advisory Panels on Allergy, General and Family Practice, and Otolaryngology believe that studies have reconfirmed that mucous membrane (sublingual) desensitization is not of proved therapeutic value in the treatment of allergy disorders.

Dimethyl Sulfoxide

QUESTION:

Is it acceptable medical practice to use dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) in treatment of pain associated with arthritic conditions (or musculoskeletal pain)?

*The Scientific Board of the California Medical Association has a Scientific Advisory Panel for each of 24 recognized specialties of medical practice. Each Advisory Panel includes representation from the appropriate department of each of the eight medical schools in California, representatives of specialty societies in the field and representatives from the Specialty Sections of the Association. The Advisory Panels are thus broadly and authoritatively based in both academia and practice.